



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Monday, 10 February 2025

10.00 am

Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA

To: The members of the Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Agenda Item 5 Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families Work Programme
(Pages 3 - 10)

To receive an update from the Service Manager, Governance Scrutiny. To assist the discussion, the following documents are attached:-

- (a) The Committee's work programme
- (b) The Committee's outcome tracker

Please use the following links to view the latest Somerset Council Forward Plans and Executive Forward Plan of planned key decisions that have been published on the Council's website:

[Somerset Council Forward Plans](#)

[Somerset Council Executive Forward Plan](#)

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Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2024 - 25

Agenda items	Lead / Owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
Joint meeting with Adults and Health Scrutiny on 25 October 2023			
Somerset approach to reducing smoking and youth vaping	Kate Anderson Rachel Handley	<p>The Committee received a presentation from Public Health Team and engaged in discussions and debate of the points raised. The presentation raised several important and informative points.</p> <p>The Committee agreed a recommendation that they wished to present to The Executive and unanimously agreed would write to the Executive in relation to electronic cigarettes, as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee asked that the current government consultation (link to the consultation Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views - Department of Health and Social Care (dhsc.gov.uk) be shared with all members who are encouraged to complete and promote locally in their divisions. The consultation runs to 6 December 2023. 2. The Committee asked that Licensing committee be asked to review and action stronger enforcement of the sale of these devices in line with the current legal position. 3. The Committee asked that the 'Quit tool not cool tool' slogan, as highlighted by the presentation be supported and promoted in the council. 4. The Committee requested that Council take a position with regard to seeking government to work at increasing legislation around electronic cigarettes, that included but not conclusive:- a ban of the use of single use devices with exception of use to support stopping smoking, a ban on child targeting (advertising and packaging), an introduction of plain packaging that would include a health warning, an introduction of an increasing age ban on sales of these devices in line with the change made to cigarette sales. 	On going
12 December 2023			

The focus for the Committee is – ‘what impact does this have on the children in Somerset’?

Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2024 - 25

Page 4

<p>Children's Services Transformation Priorities 2023 - 2026</p>		<p>The Chair referred to the discussions at the last meeting of the Committee on the Children's transformation priorities and invited volunteers to focus on particular strands of the transformation priorities, to allow individual meetings with officers to gain a better understanding / learn more about one of the areas, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for life • CLA Transformation • SEND Strategy • Connect Somerset <p>The following Committee members expressed an interest in the areas:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for Life – Jo Simons; • CLA Transformation – Cllr E Potts-Jones, Cllr M Lovell; • SEND Strategy – Cllr S Carswell, Cllr F Nicholson; • Connect Somerset – Tobie Osmond, Ruth Hobbs. 	<p>On-going</p>
<p>13 March 2024</p>			
<p>Report back from committee members on Children's Services Transformation Priorities /Areas</p>	<p>various</p>	<p>Further to the meeting in December 2023, the Committee received a verbal report back from committee members on Children's Services Transformation Priorities /Areas:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for Life – <u>Jo Simons</u> • CLA Transformation - Cllr Evie Potts, <u>Cllr Martin Lovell</u> • SEND Strategy – Cllr Simon Carswell, <u>Cllr Frances Nicholson</u> • Connect Somerset - <u>Tobie Osmond</u>, Ruth Hobbs <p>The Chair thanked members and officers for their on-going work and the Committee noted the update.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p><i>Info from Jo Simons about the Education for Life Year 1 event circulated on 14 March '24</i></p>
<p>15 May 2024</p>			
<p>care experience as a protected characteristic</p>	<p>Fiona Phur</p>	<p>The Committee received a presentation on the care experience as a Protected Characteristic. The Council in May 2023 agreed to 8 recommendations to implement care experience as a Protected Characteristic and the Committee noted the actions arising. In March 2020 the Council signed the national Care Leaver's Covenant and Committee to meeting its five core outcomes. Noted the Somerset definition of 'care leavers and care experienced' and the proposed next steps / considerations for implementation.</p>	

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Scrutiny Committee - Children & Families Outcome Tracker 2024 - 25

		Data provided and number of those who experience homelessness (slide on page 56 – slide 6) – (a) seek more information / breakdown of figures in more detail and the cttee could look at that at later date; (b) ask for update on care experience as protected characteristic at some point to a future meeting, (including views of those who are care experienced) (c) CPB is where can & do hold people to account.	To be followed up To be arranged
		Mentioned the data dashboard produced for the CPB is interesting / information. (Big sleep out on 15 June – experience what it's like to sleep on the street).	
26 June 2026			
Work plan		The Chair highlighted that the Regional Schools Commissioner will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss academisation and the process for school conversions – it is hoped this will be the August meeting but if this is not possible, it will be as soon as can be arranged. The Executive Director said that she will prepare a briefing note for the Committee on the decision-making process / procedure for academisation.	October mtg provisionally confirmed to Feb '25 mtg circulated
Children's Services Transformation Plan (deep dive)	Claire Winter	Presentation on the Children's Transformation Programme – providing update o / summary on progress, overarching finance summary, MTFP tracker and on the work of the priority workstreams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local mainstream school is the right choice for most children • Developing an excellent workforce for children • Families can access support early • Sufficient homes for children in care and school places for children with additional needs in Somerset 	On going
		Agreed that data sharing and 'how it work's' will be added to the work plan.	as part of Transform Family View item – Oct mtg
Children's Services Budget monitoring	Christian Evans	Presentation providing an update on the budget position, covering (a) the provisional 23/24 outturn position (£12.4m adverse overspend – predominately relating to external placements, fieldwork (support for children at home), and SEND transport); and (b) the emerging 24/25 issues. Stressed need to see most up to date financial details to be able fully scrutinise effectively.	On going
		Agreed that Transformation Board 'deep dive' report on CLA will be shared with committee.	September mtg

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7 August 2024			
Work Plan		Agreed that Regional Adoption Agency Joint Scrutiny Group be discussed further at next meeting (Report from meeting on 25 July 2024 and current ToR).	September mtg
Children's Services Budget monitoring	Christian Evans	<p>Presentation providing an update on the budget position for Children's Services – Month 3 (2024/25), with a £5,4m forecast overspend. Predominately relates to external placements (residential, unregistered), education cost pressures, DSG High Needs Block.</p> <p>During discussion on pressures in budget re external placements (especially unregistered) and potential overspend in this element, agreed that the Committee will ask the Executive if able to highlight any blockers within Council's control and try to resolve them.</p> <p>Re figures on page 27 (external placements), agreed that a note will be circulated on what is included in the 'other' figure (showing a £1.3m variance).</p>	On-going
JTAI of Somerset – serious youth violence	<p>Claire Winter Lisa Simpson – Area Commander, Somerset & North Somerset Marie Davies – Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children (ICB)</p>	<p>Presentation on the outcome from the recent Somerset Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) – serious youth violence.</p> <p>In May, the Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation jointly inspected the Somerset area's multi-agency response to children over 10, who are at risk of, or affected by, serious youth violence in the county. The report from the inspection, in the form of an ungraded letter was published on 18 July 2024 – JTAI of Somerset</p> <p>The Committee noted the headline findings, covering governance and multi-agency safeguarding practice. The Safer Somerset Partnership and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership are already collating action plans from all relevant organisations and strategically on behalf of each Partnership to improve partnership working in reducing serious youth violence and criminal exploitation in Somerset. These plans will be submitted to Ofsted by the Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, on behalf of the 3 Lead Safeguarding Partners by 25th October 2024. (This is the date set by the Inspectorates) .</p> <p>Noted that the multi- agency action plan will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee. Definition of 'serious youth violence / exploitation' will be circulated.</p> <p>The multi-agency plans will also be overseen and tested for effectiveness via the Integrated Care System Children and Families' Board, which meets every 2 months.</p>	<p>On going</p> <p style="text-align: right;">September mtg</p>

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18 September 2024			
Children's Services Budget monitoring – Month 4	Siobhan Cleverly / Jo Currie	<p>The Committee received a presentation which provided an update on the budget position for Children's Services – Month 4 (2024/25).</p> <p>The Council is asking for views on proposals which aim to ensure provision for children with additional needs – the consultation runs to 18 October 2024 and will be discussed at the October meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>The DSG Deficit Management Plan will be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted the update position.</p>	<p>On going</p> <p>October mtg</p> <p>To be scheduled – February mtg prov</p>
Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Somerset - serious youth violence - action plan	Claire Winter, and ICB	<p>Further to the meeting held on 7 August 2024, the Committee received an update presentation on the Somerset Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response to serious youth violence in Somerset.</p> <p>The Executive Director advised the multi-agency action plan needs to be signed off by Ofsted before it can be brought into the public domain.</p> <p>Noted that once the action plan is formally published, the SSCP has responsibility for its implementation.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, will contact (a) the ICB with regard to concerns about the implementation time for single system; (b) the Police and Crime Commissioner, regarding the action re police intelligence and sharing of information, for her views / plans to improve the system.</p> <p>The Committee will receive an update in 3 months (February 2025).</p> <p>Agreed will present the work on 'Transform' in Somerset to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>	<p>On going</p> <p>done</p> <p>October mtg</p>

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Transformation Board - deep dive - Children Looked After	Jayne Shelbourn-Barrow	<p>The Committee received a presentation on the deep dive undertaken on Children Looked After and areas being explored and further areas to explore.</p> <p>Agreed that the Executive Director will write to the President of the Family Division formally and ask support in trying to reduce the length of time Court proceedings are taking, as there are judicial areas, including Taunton which are taking longer than other areas.</p>	Completed
Regional Adoption Agency Joint Scrutiny Group	Claire Winter	<p>The Committee received and noted the report from the meeting of the Regional Adoption Agency Joint Scrutiny Group, held on 25 July 2024 and the Groups' current Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair, Cllr Nicholson and the Executive Director will meet to review the terms of reference, with a view to formulating a response which will then be shared with the Committee,</p> <p>It was noted that there will need to be further discussion by the Scrutiny Group about the terms of reference and its review by the Strategic Board before the Scrutiny Group can sign it off.</p>	On going
External placements - update on recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group	Cllr Evie Potts-Jones	<p>The Committee received and noted the update from Cllr E Potts-Jones on recent work undertaken by the Standing Panel for Education Standards.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Panel will be on 13 November 2024 and all committee members are welcome to attend. The notes from the meetings will now be shared with committee members.</p>	Completed
SWAP Audit on EHCP Improvement	Claire Winter	<p>The Committee received and noted the presentation which outlined details of the audit requested by the Director of Children's Services. This audit had been initiated because of complaints made by parents about delays in the Education Health and Care Plan payments process. It was agreed that the action plan will be shared, and the audit report will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 21 October 2024.</p>	Completed Oct mtg
21 October 2024			

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Work programme		<p>Agreed that the following items will be added to the work programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGSCO complaints directed to Somerset – December mtg • Supported internships • DoE strategically (successes) • Role of LCN's / City / Town / Parish Councils in provision of youth support <p>Noted that all Cllr's have received basic DBS checks – officers are looking into issue of enhanced checks.</p>	On-going
Children's Services Budget monitoring – Month 5	Christian Evans	<p>The Committee received a presentation on the budget position as at the end of Month 5.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <p>(a) officers will produce explanation paper on differences between residential / IMS.</p> <p>(b) officers will provide breakdown of placements out of county by ages for CLA.</p>	On-going In progress
Funding and provision for children with additional needs – feedback on consultation	Amelia Walker	<p>The Committee received a presentation outlining this consultation and received an update on the responses received as at 21 October 2024</p> <p>The Executive will be considering recommendations at the meeting on 4 November 2024 which will also include proposals about monitoring.</p> <p>Agreed that the Sufficiency Strategy will be added to work plan and as an agenda item at December mtg.</p> <p>The Committee was generally supportive of the proposals and plans; has concerns about how will be implemented; need to be child focussed like to be kept up dated.</p>	On-going Dec mtg March '25 mtg
SWAP Audit on EHCP payments	Amelia Walker	<p>The Committee received a presentation on the recent audit of EHCP payments (copy of audit report).</p> <p>The audit report on Inclusion financial management and control will be circulated when available, for information.</p> <p>Noted looking to change systems and highlighted timescales. The Chair will write to Executive around concerns.</p>	On going circulated. To be actioned

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Transform Family View	Gill Bawler, Gary Davies	The Committee received a presentation and demonstration on Transform Family View – around using data to support integrated working across the partnership. Noted the huge potential - and is an excellent piece of work. Agreed that would be useful for an all member briefing to be arranged.	On-going
			Being actioned

The CYPP 2022 - 2025 had been produced following a multi-agency process. The CYPP had three priorities: keeping children and young people safe (priority 1); supporting physical and emotional health and resilience (priority 2); enabling young people to learn and thrive (priority 3)

[Somerset Children & Young People's Plan – SSCP \(safeguardingsomerset.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting
Pending	Action on-going or plans in place to address.
Incomplete	No action currently in place with a minimum of 3 months since action agreed.

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